

prosecution. Here was a lady, sick and suffering, needing care and treatment which she had no suitable home to supply, not admissible to an asylum, and treated with every care and attention which her condition demanded. There is no complaint on her part of deprivation of liberty, and no allegation of unkind usage.

The question may be fairly asked : what moral offence had been committed ? whether, indeed, it would not have been inhumane if some person, in spite of the terrors of the law, would not have undertaken her care ?

The Lunacy Law intends to prevent persons being deprived of their liberty under the plea of lunacy, and intends to prevent lunatics from being cruelly or improperly treated, but, by permitting the treatment of lunatics under the care of friends, it admits that it does not consider certification as the only condition for the treatment even of confirmed insanity.

The Reichardt prosecution, however, if successful would have made it a crime to undertake the treatment of uncertifiable insanity, would have deterred the better class of persons from undertaking such treatment, and would have deprived many suffering invalids of proper care. The law as it stands is not satisfactory for the public welfare, but is especially unsatisfactory in exposing medical men to prosecution who are acting only on the dictates of professional duty and of the highest humanity.

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*Poor Law Provision for the Mentally Deficient Class.*

At the Poor Law Conference held lately, Dr. Shuttleworth read a paper which shows clearly the lack of provision for mentally deficient children of the State-supported class, and the methods which should be adopted to remedy the existing state of matters. It is to be noted that little progress has been made outside the metropolitan district, although certain localities have done something to meet the want by the provision of accommodation for some 400 imbeciles and idiots in establishments apart from the insane. But even this is a small beginning in face of the fact that poor-law authorities in the country at large should have provided places for some 6000, to bring the proportion up even

to the present standard of the metropolitan district. We have much pleasure in referring our readers to Dr. Shuttleworth's admirable address, which can be procured from Messrs. King and Son, Great Smith Street, Westminster. As we have repeatedly shown in these columns, there is urgent need to guide this matter to a practical issue, by separating the educable from the non-educable children, and by erecting custodial institutions for those of adult age. The annual reports of our asylums have attested the grave disadvantage of receiving into their wards those of the mentally deficient class, and we trust that local authorities will use the powers they possess to emulate the example of the Manchester and Chorlton Unions, where Dr. Rhodes has initiated the establishment of a colony on the Alt-Scherbitz plan.

A somewhat similar class of cases deserving of sympathetic consideration, the insane epileptics, has attracted the special attention of the London County Council. It is found that there are between 600 and 800 male patients suffering from epilepsy in the asylums of the metropolis, and it is believed that many of these will be better treated apart from the insane. A new colony for them, capable of receiving 300, is to be established at Horton. This admirable scheme has our entire approval, for it proceeds on the principles laid down by Dr. Shuttleworth, and marks an effort on the part of the London County Council to individualise and discriminate in the treatment of the terrible aggregation of the mentally affected committed to their charge. We hope to present to our readers a full account of the position of affairs in regard to the housing of epileptics in the next number of the JOURNAL.

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*The Children of Criminals.*

We regret to notice that proposals have been made for the segregation of the children of criminals in special institutions. This well-meaning attempt to enlist the sympathy of the public on behalf of innocent sufferers for the misdeeds of others seems to us a mistaken policy. That these children should be, as it were, ear-marked for life by such a measure is bad enough; but that their environment should be degraded and their moral